

Nomination of Walter Scott Blackburn To Be a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences

July 14, 1992

The President today announced his intention to nominate Walter Scott Blackburn, of Indiana, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences for a term expiring September 7, 1993. He would succeed Kyle Clayton Boone.

Since 1974 Mr. Blackburn has served as president and owner of Blackburn Associates Architects, Inc., in Indianapolis, IN.

From 1967 to 1974, he served as principal with Snyder, Blackburn and Associates Architects, Inc.

Mr. Blackburn graduated from Howard University School of Architecture and Engineering (bachelor of architecture, 1963). He was born February 21, 1938, in Indianapolis, IN. Mr. Blackburn is married, has three children, and resides in Indianapolis, IN.

Remarks in Boulder, Wyoming, on Ross Perot's Withdrawal From the Presidential Campaign

July 16, 1992

This is the President. I just called Ross Perot. On a very personal basis, I congratulated him. I told him I understood how difficult a decision it must have been. I told him that he had really and truly energized an awful lot of people.

Obviously, I told him I would welcome his support and the support of all those who have been out there working for him. I congratulated him on the excitement that he brought to the race, particularly the way he energized the volunteers. It is rather significant and certainly unique in these times what he was able to do, encouraging these volunteers.

Now we will make it clear to all those Perot supporters that we share many of their same principles and that we want their support and that we welcome them warmly

into our campaign. As I say, we share those principles. We need their help bringing about the implementation of these principles.

Many of the Perot supporters were basically conservative people. They were people that are worried about the values of family, that were worried about the economy and the need to get these deficits under control, the need to do something different about the neighborhoods. So I believe that we will have an opportunity to make clear to these people that they should feel at home with us as we start the campaign after the Republican Convention.

Note: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. to reporters by telephone from Secretary of State James A. Baker's ranch.

The President's News Conference in Pinedale, Wyoming

July 16, 1992

The President. Thank you all for coming over. And let me just say that I this morning, after receiving the news, called Ross

Perot; congratulated him on the way he has energized so many people in the political process; told him that, of course, I would

welcome his support and the support of those who have gotten behind him. We share the same principles with many of those people. And we're going to work hard to win them over, get their support. But it was a good phone call, and I probably will be talking to Mr. Perot again before too long.

But I see this as a positive development in a sense because I am convinced that the conservatives who are supporting Ross Perot, the legions of conservative people, will end up being with me because I think they share the same values that I speak about, the same principles that we put forward, and the same desire to change this economy and get things moving again.

So it was a good conversation and a very interesting and fascinating development in a very turbulent political year.

Presidential Campaign

Q. Mr. President, did he indicate to you whether he would ever throw his support to either you or to Mr. Clinton? What did he say?

The President. No, there was no indication of that at all.

Q. Mr. President, even before Ross Perot appeared on the political scene, the "right track, wrong track" numbers in the polls were going in the wrong direction. The majority of the American people felt the country was headed in the wrong direction. How do you account for that, and what do you intend to do about it?

The President. I think the economy has been the main reason for that. The economy has been sluggish. There are obviously signs that the recovery is underway. Many people have not felt that recovery. And I am absolutely convinced that when you have a long, drawn-out recession, when people's family are hurting, this accounts for that.

Q. Mr. President, the Vice President criticized Ross Perot as a temperamental tycoon without respect for the Constitution. And other members of your administration and campaign have been critical of him. Don't you think his supporters are going to be a little bit mad at you when they think about who to turn to?

The President. No, I don't think so. No, I don't.

Q. Can you explain your optimism?

The President. Yes, because I think a lot of people that supported Ross want to see the kinds of changes that I want to see. They recognized in him a dynamic figure that could energize voters. But when it gets down to the issues, I think they're going to be much more on my side than on the side of the Democratic ticket.

Q. Mr. President, do you believe this development helps you in the long run?

The President. Yes, I think it does.

Q. Why exactly, because your aides have been saying that they thought he took votes away from Clinton. And now you're saying it helps you that he's out.

The President. Well, I don't know what my aides have been saying, but I can read the surveys like anybody else can. I think it helps us, and I think most people think so.

Q. You said you'd be talking to Perot again, Mr. President—

The President. What?

Q. You said you'd be talking to Mr. Perot again. What will that be about?

The President. We were sitting out, like on top of that mountain, although not that very mountain. It was a little hard to—we had a disconnect on the conversation.

Q. Also, Mr. President, there have been persistent speculations that at some point Secretary Baker would come over to your campaign.

The President. I've read those speculations, yes.

Q. Will you resolve that once and for all here today?

The President. No, I can't resolve it here today at all.

Q. Why not?

The President. I know nobody will believe this, but it is 3 o'clock in Wyoming, and honestly I have not talked about that with Jim Baker yet.

Q. So the option is open, Mr. President?

The President. Always when I'm talking to an old, trusted friend, all options are open about what I talk about. But what happens, that's pure speculation. That subject has not come up.

Q. Does the option remain that Mr. Baker would join the campaign—

The President. No, there's no options open or closed on it. I just haven't discussed it.

Q. In that case, why don't you foreclose it, stop all the speculation?

The President. Because I don't feel inclined to do that. I'm going to win this election, and I want the best possible team around me. Jim Baker's doing a superb job as Secretary of State, and he's off on a very important mission Saturday. So he's got a full portfolio right as it is. But who knows? I don't know.

Q. Can I follow up on that? The concerns about Secretary Baker coming back to the campaign, a lot of them come from a campaign that feels that they just haven't been able to get the job done. And now that you're moving past the Democratic Convention toward the Republican one, do you change tactics? Do you have a new strategy now? With that rally tomorrow in Wyoming, is that to begin the tougher candidacy?

The President. No, I've said that a lot of my own personal campaigning and how I campaign will be on hold until after the Republican Convention.

Q. Mr. President, how exactly did you hear about this announcement? Were you sitting fishing in a creek or what?

The President. I was fishing in a creek, and one of our aides came, I believe it was the military aide, and said that there was going to be a press conference in a few minutes and that it was widely reported in advance of the press conference that Mr. Perot intended to withdraw. I didn't hear the press conference. We've not listened to the television. I have not listened to the radio. I did, however, get a report, second-hand report, on the press conference and then after that placed a call to him.

Q. What exactly was your reaction when you heard it?

The President. I was surprised. I was surprised because Ross Perot has energized a lot of people in this country. He's gotten a lot of volunteers involved. You could feel it. And incidentally, there was some show of that out in San Diego. But I didn't detect any personal animosity from the people. I detect a great enthusiasm for Ross Perot. And that's one reason I think we have a fertile field in which to hunt for more sup-

port.

Q. Mr. President, Ross Perot spoke of the revitalization of the Democratic Party as the reason that he was pulling out. You've obviously watched the convention and Clinton. Do you see that revitalization——

The President. I beg your pardon. I have not watched the convention.

Q. Have not seen any of the convention at all?

The President. Have not seen it at all, not seen it. I've read some clippings about it, but I've not listened to it nor watched it.

Q. You're just not interested?

The President. Same as I did 4 years ago. Just want a little respite.

Q. When he said revitalization of the Democratic Party, he indicated by saying that perhaps he would like to see these people go more toward Clinton than you, although he didn't say anything about you. When he talked to you——

The President. Well, I didn't hear that comment at all. What I thought he said, what I was told that he said for not continuing to run was that he wouldn't be able to get the votes that he would need if the race was thrown into the House, and he felt that it would be if he remained in the race.

Q. Did he indicate to you at all in his telephone call how he felt the voters should go?

The President. No. No indication whatsoever.

Q. Years ago, you and Ross Perot were friends, or at least just acquaintances. Are you going to put all this behind you, no hard feelings? Can you do that?

The President. Yes, I am.

Q. How can you do that?

The President. I always do that, Ann [Ann Compton, ABC News]. I always do that. I don't like to lose friends over politics. I never have. I've always turned the other cheek, and I've always tried to make new friends. And I don't think that's bad. I think that's a sign of character, not a sign of weakness.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us anything about what Ross Perot said to you? Were you able to hear him at all?

The President. I heard fairly well. He had

a little difficulty. He told me it was breaking up. But no, he just said he appreciated the phone call and was very pleasant. But there was no substance discussed.

Q. What did he say when you said you'd be delighted to have his support?

The President. Well, didn't say anything. I didn't put it in the form that I was awaiting an answer at that very moment. It was more—I just mentioned it.

President's Vacation

Q. Mr. President, you said that you hadn't discussed with Secretary Baker the possibility of him coming over to your campaign.

The President. That's true.

Q. What besides fishing have you been talking to him about up to—

The President. Family. I had a son up here. The joy of fishing with your son in a river in Wyoming, I'll tell you, it's hard to compare with anything. And he has his son Jamie here, and Susan Baker is here. Barbara's not here. She catches headaches at altitude, and so she didn't come. But we just fished, talking about fishing.

You know, when you're out in a river with a friend, it doesn't matter much what you talk about. And I've concluded, not just because of my own record, it doesn't matter whether you catch any fish or not. You're there, and you're in the outdoors, and you're away from all the hubbub of, I think, one of the ugliest political years I've ever seen. And I've been around the track a long time. You forget about your day-to-day cares. And it's been a total joy for me.

Now, all this development today has kind of changed this day a little bit from yesterday. But it's been most enjoyable. So I couldn't even tell you what we talked about. We joke. We have fun. We reminisce. Jim Baker and I go back a long, long time. And our families are interlocked. Our kids are friends.

Presidential Campaign

Q. Do you think the campaign will be less ugly now?

The President. I hadn't felt that it's been hyper-ugly, the campaign itself.

Q. Did you discuss Ed Rollins' decision?

The President. Didn't come up. Didn't come up.

Q. You surprised by that?

The President. Yes, I was surprised. I was surprised.

Q. Mr. President, this campaign, with Mr. Perot out now, does seem to present perhaps a starker choice than it did in the past. Is that going to change the way in which you approach the next 3 months?

The President. Well, it's happened so soon that I haven't had a chance to talk to any strategists about that. But clearly a two-way race is more traditional in the sense of American politics. And I think in the final analysis that I'll win this race. I think people will look at the big picture, the whole picture, and I believe we'll win. I think our values are right. I think the fact that kids go to bed with a little less fear about nuclear war these days, I think that's extraordinarily positive. I think the economy's tough, but I think what we've proposed to correct it is going to prove to be better than the opponent's.

So I'm prepared to take my case to the American people in the fall with renewed confidence. And I believe that I'll win this race.

Q. Did you talk with Mr. Teeter, and what did he tell you?

The President. You mean after the Perot thing?

Q. That's right.

The President. Did not talk to him. Talked to him last night, but I didn't talk to him since the Perot matter.

Q. Mr. President, what do you think would have happened had he stayed in the race? If it had gone to the House, do you think you might have lost?

The President. I didn't ever think it would go to the House.

Q. Mr. President, one more. Now that Clinton is officially your opponent, what do you have to say about him?

The President. I'm reading the clips and listening all fall, all winter long. And I'll be prepared at the appropriate time to comment on that.

Q. Did you congratulate him on the telephone? Did you call him?

The President. Congratulate Clinton?

Q. Yes, sir.

The President. On what?

Q. On winning the nomination, I suppose.

The President. Oh no, I forgot to do that. [Laughter] But maybe I can do that now. He fought hard, and he won his party's nomination. Having been there before myself, I can say that's no mean achievement. But I'm perfectly glad to do that. And then we'll go to general quarters in the fall because we differ on almost everything on the issues, but we're going to keep it on the issues.

Q. Are you more optimistic now about the two-party system than you might have been when Perot hit a high point?

The President. I don't believe I ever lost confidence in the two-party system because when you look back at our country and then compare it to democracies around the world or other systems, we've had the most stable possible political system for 200 years. And for most of that you had a viable, strong two-party system. I think in the final analysis, the American people understand that. That has not been in focus up to this point. But I've not lost confidence in it. And I just think that it has served our country well for a long time. I do think that the question mark of going to the House having been removed, that clarifies things for the American electorate and makes it easier in a sense because I think in some people's minds there was some doubt about that.

I think Judy's [Judy A. Smith, Deputy Press Secretary] trying to get some——

Q. Is that a valid reason for dropping out, as Mr. Perot said, the fear of——

The President. I would leave that to him.

Q. Mr. President, will you debate Mr. Clinton, and would you favor a Vice Presidential debate in the fall campaign?

The President. I expect there will be both.

Israel

Q. Any comment on the Israeli announcement on the settlements?

The President. No. If you'd help me with that announcement you're talking about.

Q. I believe they've announced they're freezing settlements.

The President. Well, the Israeli election was a lot about that. And I can't comment on the statement. I've not seen it. But I'm looking forward to receiving the Prime Minister of Israel and hopefully in the next couple of weeks, next 2 or 3 weeks. I've pledged to work to strengthen the very important relationship between the two countries. But I just can't comment on that particular because literally I'm—I've seen some clips, some summaries, what they call a White House News Summary. But I've not read the papers. I have not watched television. Sorry, Ann. And I have not listened to the radio on this. That's why I'm in such a wonderfully relaxed mood. And now I want to go back and catch a few more fish.

President's Vacation

Q. How many fish did you catch, sir?

The President. It is an unimpressive record. However, here's my side of it. [Laughter] I would like you to—no, I caught two or three yesterday—three, and two today. But it's not—it's the hunt as well as catching the fish. It's trying to put the fly right where you think the action is and standing there in the beauty of this marvelous country of ours, standing in the middle of a stream. And it's very hard to describe. But for people that love the outdoors as I do, love this West as I do, why, they'll know what I mean. It's not catching the fish. It's being out there in nature with nature all around you.

Q. How's Jim Baker's cooking?

The President. Not near as good as his Secretary-of-State-ship. But his wife's cooking is superb.

Let me say hello to these guys. Thank you all for coming.

Note: The President's 136th news conference began at 2:50 p.m. at the U.S. Air Force Pinedale Seismic Research Facility. In the news conference, the following persons were referred to: Robert Teeter, campaign chairman, Bush-Quayle '92; and Ed Rollins, former Perot campaign cochairman.